

Chinese Joss house,  
Weaverville, California.



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not require a formal education. These immigrant males sought low-cost housing near employment opportunities. Clustering together they created Chinatowns which tended to occur in residential hotel districts at the edge of American central business districts. These zones of the city usually had a mixed building stock which could contain residential hotels, small businesses, industry, and spaces for immigrant organizations. Brick multi-storey buildings dating from the late-19th to the early-20th century predominated with occasional wood- and steel-framed structures interspersed. Residential hotels had individual rooms lined upon single- or double-loaded corridors. Larger buildings with more regular plans tended to have rooms of the same size which could vary from 1.8 m × 2.4 m (6ft × 8 ft) to about 3.7 m × 4.6 m (12 ft × 15 ft). Services were commonly shared, with washrooms, bathrooms and latrines accessed from the hallways. Some buildings had kitchens installed in enlarged spaces of the hallway, or on what would otherwise have been rental rooms. Lightwells provided natural light and air to the rooms not facing a street or alley. Neighbourhood facilities and services were important for the inhabitants of the residential hotels. With only minimal cooking and food storage facilities, nearby groceries and low-cost restaurants were a necessity. Building frontages facing pavements and heavily travelled alleys would be used as commercial spaces for a variety of shops and businesses. Small factories, such as sewing and fortune cookie factories, often occupied spaces off alleys and in basements.

Discriminatory housing policies kept Chinese-Americans out of almost all suburban neighbourhoods until the late 1960s. With the passage of the Civil Rights Acts and the change in immigration laws during the 1960s, many Chinese-American families left the old Chinatowns and moved to the suburbs, where higher densities of Chinese-Americans were signalled by shopping malls with Chinese signs and goods catering to Asian-American tastes. The exodus of middle-class Chinese-Americans to the suburbs was more than matched by the new immigration of Chinese, Taiwanese, and other Asians of Chinese ancestry from around the Pacific Rim. Increasingly the residential hotels of the old Chinatowns have been crowded with families of newly arrived immigrants, the elderly and the poor. This has led to the population growth of old Chinatowns, and the continuation of low housing standards in these communities caused by crowding in old buildings.

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See also for 3.VI.8.c  
1.V.6.1–1 Single-wall

Reference for 3.VI.8.c  
Marshall, Howard W., and  
Ahlborn, Richard E.,  
1980

See also  
1.VII.5.b Facades:  
Chinese-American  
1.IX.6.a Association  
building

References  
Liu, John K. C., 1980  
Yip, Christopher L., 1982,  
1986

### 3.VI.8.d Chinese (CA; OR; WA)

Sizeable Chinese immigration to the United States began with the California goldrush of 1849, was curtailed by a series of exclusion acts from 1882 until 1943, and increased again after 1965. During the 19th century the vast majority of immigrants were males. In 1880 there were about 18 males for each woman; in 1950 the ratio had shifted to 2:1. As a result, the history of the Chinese-American community from 1849 until 1950 was marked by an effort to create a surrogate for the traditional Chinese extended family.

Until the 1930s, Chinatowns were dominated by the needs and lifestyles of single males dependent upon labour which did